Discontinuance of central assistance to States

†1949. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Central assistance which was provided to States by Central Government for the development of sports infrastructure has been discontinued;

(b) if so, the reasons for discontinuance of the same; and

(c) whether Government are considering to formulate any alternative scheme replacing the previous one?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government decided to transfer the Centrally Sponsored Sports Infrastructure Schemes to the State sector w.e.f. 1.4.2005. The Ministry took up the matter with the Planning Commission and Ministry of Finance for reviewing the decision in view of financial constraints of States, cost intensive nature of certain categories of infrastructure such as Synthetic Surfaces etc., and the committed liability towards the already approved projects. The Planning Commission did not agree to the request stating that these schemes have been identified for transfer to States as part of the general exercise to reduce the number of Centrally sponsored Schemes, but agreed to provide funds for completion of ongoing projects during the Xth Plan to the extent of the committed liability.

(c) In recognition of the shortage of sports infrastructure, particularly in the rural areas, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports is considering the launching of a scheme—"Panchayat Yuva Khel Abhiyan" with the objective of developing basic sports infrastructure, and promoting games and sports activities at the village/sub-district level, both as an essential ingredient of the development of the youth and to significantly expand the catchment for spotting and nurturing of sports talent. Consultations are being held in this regard with all the stakeholders concerned with a view to finalizing the proposal.

Schemes for promotion of sports

1950. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.